Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (*Currently Amended*) Apparatus for determining the award of a plurality of prizes having respective prize values between an upper prize value and a lower prize value, the upper prize value being greater than the lower prize value, ~~the apparatus~~ including:

memory for storing data indicative of a current prize value, the upper prize value, and the lower prize value;

an input device ~~being~~ that is responsive to input signals from a respective plurality of gaming terminals for providing an increment signal;

a controller ~~for defining~~ that is configured to define the current prize value as a first of the prize values, the controller being additionally configured to be ~~and being~~ responsive to the increment signal for incrementing an accumulated value toward the current prize value; and

a comparator ~~being~~ that is responsive to the current prize value and the accumulated value for determining if the current prize value is to be awarded and, if so, generating an award signal that actuates the controller to define the current prize value as a second of the prize values;

wherein the controller is additionally configured to, following a determination that the current prize value is to be awarded, reset the accumulated value to one or another of the upper prize value or the lower prize value, such that on at least one occasion the controller resets the accumulated value to the upper prize value and on at least one other occasion the controller resets the accumulated value to the lower prize value.

2. Cancelled.

3. (*Currently Amended*) Apparatus according to claim 1 [[2]], wherein the controller is responsive to the upper prize value and the lower prize value for determining the second of the prize values.

4. (*Currently Amended*) Apparatus according to claim 1 [[2]], wherein the controller alternates between a mode wherein the accumulated value increments upwardly toward the current prize value, and a mode wherein the accumulated value increments downwardly toward the current prize value ~~a prize value is determined to fall alternately between:~~

~~the current prize value and the upper prize value; and~~

~~the current prior prize value and the lower prize value~~.

5. Cancelled.

6. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 1 [[5]], wherein the accumulated value is alternately reset to the upper prize value and the lower prize value.

7. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the terminals are respective gaming machines.

8. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the terminals are computer devices such as stand alone desktop computers.

9. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the terminals include gaming machines and computer devices.

10. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the computer devices are linked to the apparatus via web-enabled or other online interfaces.

11. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 1, further including a payout device that is responsive to the increment signal and the award signal for selecting the terminal to which the prize is awarded.

12. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 11, wherein each terminal includes a gaming balance and the payout device, upon selecting the terminal, credits the respective gaming balance.

13. (Original) Apparatus according to claim 12, wherein the payout device credits the gaming balance by the accumulated value.

14. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 1, further including a display driver for providing persons using the terminals with a visual indication of the accumulated value.

15. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the terminals including gaming machines located in an establishment, the display driver is a dedicated hardware and software device that drives an LED display that is prominently located within the establishment.

16. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the terminals include computer devices and the display driver is coded into communications protocol between the apparatus and the computer devices.

17. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the driver also provides persons using the terminals with a visual indication of one or more of:

the upper prize value;

the lower prize value; and

whether the accumulated value is incrementing toward the upper or the lower prize value.

18. (Previously Presented) Apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the comparator is part of the controller.

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Cancelled)

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Cancelled)

23. (Cancelled)

24. (Cancelled)

25. (*Currently Amended*) A method for determining the award of a plurality of prizes having respective prize values, the method including:

storing data indicative of a current prize value;

being responsive to input signals from a respective plurality of gaming terminals for providing an increment signal;

providing a controller for defining the current prize value as a first of the prize values and being responsive to the increment signal for incrementing an accumulated value toward the current prize value; and

being responsive to the current prize value and the accumulated value for determining if the current prize value is to be awarded and, if so, generating an award signal that actuates the controller to define the current prize value as a second of the prize values;

wherein on one occasion the accumulated value increments upwardly toward the current prize value, and on another occasion the accumulated value increments downwardly toward the current prize value.

26. (Cancelled)

27. (Cancelled)

28. (*Currently Amended*) A method of awarding a plurality of prizes having respective prize values, comprising:

(a) monitoring wagers from multiple terminals;

(b) setting a current prize value to a first prize value;

(c) incrementing an accumulated value in accordance with the wagers until the accumulated value is equal to or beyond a threshold;

(d) identifying the terminal whose wager resulted in the accumulated value being equal to or beyond the threshold;

(e) setting the current prize value to a second prize value; and

(f) repeating steps (c) and (d);

wherein on one occasion the accumulated value increments upwardly toward the threshold, and on another occasion the accumulated value increments downwardly toward the threshold.

29. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 28, wherein the threshold is equal to the current prize value.

30. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 28, wherein the threshold is equal to the current prize value and step (c) comprises incrementing the accumulated value until the accumulated value is equal to the current prize value.

31. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 28, wherein the threshold is equal to the current prize value and step (c) comprises incrementing the accumulated value until the accumulated value is beyond the current prize value.

32. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 29, further comprising defining an upper prize value and a lower prize value, wherein steps (b) and (e) comprise setting the current prize value between the upper prize value and the lower prize value.

33. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 32, wherein step (b) comprises setting the current prize value between the accumulated value and the upper prize value, and step (e) comprises setting the current prize value between the accumulated value and the lower prize value.

34. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 32, further comprising displaying the accumulated value, the upper prize value, and the lower prize value.

35. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 32, wherein step (b) comprises setting the accumulated value to the upper prize value, and step (e) comprises setting the accumulated value to the lower prize value.

36. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 29, wherein step (a) comprises monitoring wagers from the multiple terminals, wherein each of the multiple terminals are executing games that are otherwise independent of one another.

37. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 29, wherein step (c) comprises weighting the wagers.

38. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 29, further comprising awarding the first and second prize values to players associated with the identified terminals.